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ABSTRACT

This report describes a course in Church Librarianship (LIB 220) that is offered by Northland Pioneer College's (NPC) Department of Library/Media Technology Program. The college has been able to promote unity in an area which is culturally and religiously diverse by offering a 3-credit course that provides an introduction to church librarianship. The course addresses the following topics: interlibrary cooperation and networking; purchasing denominational materials with limited funding; publicizing the church library; budgeting; space planning; processing and cataloging materials; volunteer staffing; providing reference services; and personnel training. Students are required to choose one of these areas to develop into a term project, and they are encouraged to contact the denomination of which they are a member to determine the status of church libraries in their local church. In addition, the students go on a field trip to existing church libraries. It is noted that since NPC is the only community college teaching this course for academic credit in Arizona, it is often used as a role model for other institutions interested in offering a similar course. (MAB)

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ANSWERING A SPECIAL NEED BY PROVIDING ACADEMIC TRAINING FOR CHURCH LIBRARIES IN RURALLY ISOLATED NORTHEASTERN ARIZONA

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ANSWERING A SPECIAL NEED BY PROVIDING
ACADEMIC TRAINING FOR CHURCH LIBRARIES
IN RURALLY ISOLATED NORTHEASTERN, ARIZONA

Northland Pioneer College's Department of Library/Media Technology Program serves rurally isolated Navajo and Apache Counties in Northeastern Arizona. The largest community, Winslow, is about 10,000. The largest population base is about 12,000 in the White Mountain Area, which includes Show Low, Pinetop, Linden, Pinedale, Clay Springs, Lakeside and McNary. The entire service area is filled with diversity. There are areas which are fairly wealthy, while others are more accurately described around poverty lines. The area includes three Indian reservations: the Navajo, Hopi, and White Mountain Apache.

On a religious note, the area is served by a wide variety of religions. The Lutheran Church is strong on the White Mountain Apache reservation. The Presbyterian Church has strengths on part of the Navajo reservation, and the Franciscans also have a strong presence in several Navajo reservation areas. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints is responsible for much of the pioneer settlement of the area, especially in the Holbrook, Winslow, Joseph City, Snowflake, Taylor, Lakeside and Shumway areas. Most mainline denominations are represented somewhere in the area. The American Baptists have a mission on the Hopi Reservation. Many denominations run boarding schools for Indians.

While a religious diversity predominates, the Department of Library/Media Technology has been able to promote unity within diversity by offering LIB 220 - Church Librarianship.

Church Librarianship is a three credit course which is literally a soup to nuts introduction to librarianship for the church library worker. It is not a course in theology. Students do not get into theological discussions of any kind. We have taught the course several semesters. Inter-library cooperation and networking are stressed. The first semester the course was taught, we had twelve students representing eight different denominations. Students enjoyed meeting resource people from other churches that they could communicate with. Buying denominational material with the limited funding available is stressed. If a church needs materials from or about another denomination, this material can easily be borrowed. particularly when the church librarians know each other.

A unit on publicizing the church library is stressed. Students are taught to use any publicity vehicle available to them including but not limited to church newsletters, bulletin boards and Sunday bulletins.

Another unit emphasizes budgeting. Students are taught how to go to their church leaders for a budgetary allocation, however small it may be. Funds can be augmented by starting a memorial book plan. Books may be donated in memory of someone in the congregation who passes away. They

may also be donated in honor of a happy event--the birth of a baby, a twenty-fifth or fiftieth wedding anniversary, etc. Someone in the congregation can design an attractive bookplate for library use.

Space planning is also addressed. Few churches have conventional library space. Often, libraries have to be started in Sunday school rooms, or even in existing office space. It is not unheard of to start libraries in closets in some churches. As the library is used, it will grow.

Other units address the processing and cataloging of materials, as well as staffing with volunteers, and answering reference questions. The training of other or additional library workers is an important instructional component, as is the acquisition of library materials.

Students are encouraged to pick one area that they are especially interested in for a term project. A popular project is a the development of a community directory of church resources. Another element is a field trip to existing church libraries. Throughout the course, the vital ministry of a thriving church library is stressed.

Outside help is available from many sources. The Church and Synagogue Library Association has published many helpful easy to understand textbooks. Many denominations have created their own library associations within their church structures. One highly successful one is the Catholic Library Association. Current addresses for these associations are included in the current Gale publication,

Encyclopedia of Associations.

Students are encouraged to contact the denomination of which they are a member to find out what the denomination has done about church libraries in the local church. Many churches have sophisticated library resources, while others have not addressed this issue. Many can provide starter bibliographies. Others like the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints (Mormons), and the Southern Baptist Convention, can provide sophisticated help to the church librarian. The Mormon library component includes material on stake and ward libraries as well as genealogical libraries. When a particular denomination does not have any particular library department on the national level, students are encouraged to consult with recognized church authorities on the local, state, regional and national level.

If the library is to succeed, it must have the blessing of the local church leaders. Sometimes regional, state and national approvals are needed as well. Students are taught to communicate with church leaders in a positive way, so that the ultimate goal--the development of a church library--can be achieved. Most library situations are highly political, the church library situation is not excluded. Where there is a will, there is a way. Students are taught to find this way within their own church organizations.